



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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BAUCUS PRAISES JAPAN'S FOOD SAFETY COMMISSION ON CONFIRMING SAFETY OF U.S. BEEF

Senator Urges Japanese Government to Take Swift Action to Lift Its Beef Ban

Washington, DC - Senator Max Baucus (D-Mont.), ranking Democrat on the Senate Finance Committee, applauded the action taken today by Japan's Food Safety Commission (FSC) that upholds the safety of U.S. beef. After several weeks of public consultation, the FSC confirmed its earlier finding that U.S. and Japanese beef carry a similar risk level of Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE).

"Japanese scientists today concluded what I have been telling the Japanese government for almost two years – U.S. beef is the safest and highest quality in the world," said Senator Baucus.

Baucus continued, **"Just yesterday, I spoke with the Japanese Ambassador and argued for Japan to lift the ban, as I have done repeatedly for the past two years. I even filed comments in Japanese with the Food Safety Commission to underscore the great lengths that we take here in America to ensure the safety and quality of our beef."**

Senator Baucus filed his comments as part of a four-week public consultation period that the FSC conducted during the month of November regarding the safety of U.S. beef. Last year, he traveled to Japan to meet with Japan's trade and agriculture ministers to argue for lifting the ban. Baucus also brought senior officials from Japan and elsewhere to Montana – and fed them Montana beef on a Montana ranch – to encourage them to lift the ban.

Japan has banned U.S. beef since December 2003 after a Canadian-born dairy cow in Washington tested positive for bovine spongiform encephalopathy, or BSE.

"Now that Japan has the scientific backing that it has claimed to need, the Japanese Government must take immediate action to lift its ban," said Baucus. **"I expect Montana beef to be on Japan's shelves for the New Year. The time for Japanese foot-dragging has finally come to an end."**

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